

Run Away Now by Dreamer1214

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Summary:

The events of Starcourt occurred nearly ten years ago and the party has mostly put it behind them. It doesn't stop what happened in the past from influencing every move made in their current lives. The moment changed their lives and rocked their high school years. Not exactly for the better either. Max's high school life was turbulent and hasn't stopped the years following that from being a round robin of chaotic mistakes either. Now, her next big life regret is perhaps watching her best friend marry someone else because she's never known exactly how to admit to what she's wanted ...or felt like she deserved it. (Set in current time rather than the 80s. Completely AU with some show pulling)

1. Chapter 1

Author's Note:

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Hey guys! Well... if anyone actually reads this trash. I've been working on this stuff for a good almost 2 years now and usually it's just my little project that I share with a couple of friends. But after one of my best's decided to throw her hand at HP I figured why not post some of my crap here. But yeah. enough of my babbling. Let me give you a little bit of insight here...

while we all love the fact that stranger things is set in the 80s. I decided a while ago to dabble in tossing the kids into current time. Needless to say, they lose a hell of a lot of innocence when that happens. Um, so everything that happened with the upside down still occurred the way you know it. Billy's still dead. All of that. There are just little bits that are changed due to the time changes.

I will also tell you that this is in no particular order but if I decide to keep posting what I have I'll always let you know where in the timeline it falls at the beginning of the chapter. There is a continuous thread, but the flashbacks to everything in the past will always show up in a random fashion.

yeah, that's about all of the rambling I can think of. If you take the time to read my crap awesome! I appreciate you. I hope you enjoy this strange swap in time and that the characters still reflect those that you love.

August of Last Year

There was something about press gatherings that never failed to

make her jittery. It reminded her of the sirens and lights that had filled the mall that warm July evening. The one that she tried so hard to block from her mind.

This wasn't anything like that.

The logical part of her brain knew that her agent had been right and that this was the best way to gain exposure and get her work out there. Her work and the work of the at-risk youth that had an exhibition up for opening weekend. That was the most important thing to her. Exposure. Exposure so that the doors of 7 Waves could stay open. So that she could pay her rent for the gallery and her share of hers and Mike's place. So that she could keep those kids creating and let them know that they didn't have to go down any bad paths and whatever the shit else have you.

Max didn't know anymore. She was itching for a cigarette or a hit. Either one would have sufficed.

“Miss Mayfield, may I say... you look ravishing this afternoon. You’re absolutely glowing.” she ran a hand against the back of her neck as the reporter stopped her. Shit. she hated this. A light scarlet kissed her cheeks as she looked around for anyone who might be able to get her out of the spotlight. Though no one offered a hand of luck in that. **”Caleb from The Salem Source. Care to sit down with me for a moment? I would love to get a profile.”** Max held in a groan and nodded her head as she gestured to the oversized red couch and dug her hands into the pockets of the jean jacket around her shoulders. –her reminder of him always keeping her safe.

Beat up converses slid along hardwood flooring. She let the reporter sit first before pulling hands from pockets and tucking them under her thighs so as not to fidget. **“Your parents have to be so proud of everything you’ve accomplished. Are they here today?”** what a question to start off with. She hadn't spoken two sentences to her mother since the morning before she was supposed to graduate. The harsh crack to the side of her face had been the final straw in years worth of abuse. Her father... her father was another story. He had a family that didn't include her. Her stepfather... she didn't even go there. **“My mother and I are estranged,”** she said simply.

By habit, she pulled her hand out of its resting place and started to fiddle with the chain around her neck.

“Your necklace. You have quite a few photographs of it in your collection. Exquisite photos, if I may add. Is there a story behind it?” These were the questions that she’d expected. The ones that she hadn’t quite been prepared for but nonetheless the ones she wanted to share. She wrapped the St. Christopher pendant in between fingers, **“um... actually it belonged to my brother.”** she knew to prepare herself, as sad as it was to say, before the reporter opened his mouth again.

They always knew. They always had questions.

From the look in the gentleman’s eye, he was going to be no different. **“Ah yes, the Starcourt Mall victim. Could you tell us a little about that?”** instantaneously, blue eyes seemed to darken. **“My brother, Billy, was a victim of child abuse that more teachers and so-called adults shrugged their shoulders at the time. Which is the reason why a percentage of the proceeds made in the gallery goes directly to The Waves Foundation.”** she took a breath before she continued, already knowing that the man in front of her was not entirely amused with her evasion of the questions asked. **“I set it up about 5 years ago in his name.”** she had. Balancing school at the time and all of the documentation to make it a thing had been taxing but worth it. **“It benefits kids who’s parents have walked out and maybe in a precarious situation.”**

The reporter stared at her slackjawed for a moment. She could tell that he was figuring out how to formulate his question. Why did they do this? Why couldn’t they just learn to let what had happened at the mall rest? It caused those who were involved enough grief. Then again it didn’t matter to the vultures with pens. **“That’s wonderful Miss Mayfield. However, do you think you could expand on the mall...”** there it was, her anger flared for a moment. **“Not for nothing but...”**

Before she could go off, before what she really wanted to do happened, she felt a hand wrap against her bicep. The tightness in

pressure could have only meant one person. “**I hate to cut in sir, but Maxine is needed for a moment, due excuse us.**” god, she hated him almost as much as she hated the reporter on the couch.

Yet, as he yanked her up she abided.

They were out of prying eyes, tucked behind one of the walls by the small kitchenette when he finally let go of her, “**Sup, slut.**” Lucas’s smirk lit his face and she rolled her eyes in return, “**Shitbag ... Shitbag’s Wife. Where are my nephews?**” the redhead peered around the couple for the two young boys. Quickie marriages and what have you.

“**Protesting your snoozefest. Mike’s smoking out back and they’re with him.**” irresponsible. At least she never lit up around the kids. But that was a discussion for another day. “**El’s on her way. Dustin’s running late. Said you probably forgot these though.**” when he held up the baggie of little blue pills she snatched it from his hand. He always had to make things look suspicious.

The anxiety meds were her lifeline. Also a pill she generally forgot to take. She’d never had a very good track record for remembering any type of medication. “**Shit, you ARE good for something.**” Max shrugged as she emptied the baggie into her hand and reached out for Lisa’s glass of champagne. The woman who held no love loss for her sneered for a moment before handing it over. The two women would never fully get along. Not that that was any real surprise.

“**Did D say how long he’s gonna be?**” she asked once the pills were swallowed and the glass was returned to Lisa, empty of course. Stepping away from them she studied the gallery for a moment. Things seemed to be going well with the mulling audience who stopped to look at photos and mingled with one another in conversation.

The gallery of the girl who’s brother was killed in some horrific unexplained incident in Indiana.

She already knew that that was what the articles were all going to feature. She’d been prepared about that when Gracelyn, her publicist,

had figured out who she was. It was something that she was always going to have to deal with. The questions as to what had gone on that day. It was always worse when they figured out who...

The ding over the door made her spin around quickly, a full smile pulled at her lips. Through the gallery she tore for a moment, excusing herself from various reporters and the like as she finally collided into the body that she'd seen mulling around their kitchen in an intense need for coffee and french toast first thing in the morning, **"Thank fuck."** she rasped out as she laced her arm through Jane Hopper's. **"There are vultures fucking everywhere and the only two to show up so far are Mike and Lucas. Where the shit is Will?"** she vented. Feeling at least a little more at peace with El there.

This wasn't going to be so bad, she could handle this ...she hoped.

2. First Day - Freshmen Year

Notes for the Chapter:

Just wanted to say a quick thanks to those who took the time to read through my first chapter. I appreciate it!

Again, I know it's not your traditional ST but personally I love the world I've created and I like sharing it.

As always, please feel free to leave your thoughts and things! I would love to hear reactions, give me what you're thinking... all of that jazz.

I hope you enjoy this chapter. It's just a flashback to the beginning, before the story really starts here. It's more of just a check in with Max's mental state and where things stand in the beginning so you can see just how down hill things get and where she finds her evening off line.

I'm going to stop rambling in notes now.

Enjoy!

Flashback - First Day Freshmen Year

High school. There was something about the thought of high school that perhaps scared her more than it should have. Scared her to the point that she had no interest in actually admitting. She'd learned from a very credible source years ago now that you didn't admit to weakness. You buried it down deep and pretended that you didn't feel it.

She'd watched him do just that time and time again.

The transition between schools shouldn't have phased her. Just a year ago she'd come to Hawkins for the first time and she'd handled Hawkins middle as a pro. She had friends ...and a boyfriend. She was settled here now. This wasn't that big of a deal. It was just new halls, a new combination to unlock. It shouldn't have made her heart gear

up to race in her chest, shouldn't have made the edges of her vision a little bit blurred.

But it did.

The only thing she could think of was that it was because for better or for worse (mostly worse) the walls had a habit of talking. There were eyes cast at her, ones that wondered and questioned. She was the freshmen whose brother died. Under mysterious circumstances. She'd heard the rumors that majority sided with. The bullshit that they texted between one another and whispered behind their hands.

She'd heard them the other night at that party in the woods.

“Miss Mayfield?” the voice behind her made her jump, holding onto the straps of her backpack a little bit tighter as she turned to face the voice who'd asked, a quirk to her copper brow. **“Maxine, I just... I’m Mrs. Rameriz, I’m a counselor here at Hawkins High. I didn’t want to formally call you to my office and scare you. But I did want you to know that if there’s ever anything you need to discuss...”** wonderful. Day one and the shrink was already out for her.

It took double her energy to hold in the groan that threatened to expel from her lips, **“Great, thanks.”** her response was passive as she pushed forward from the older woman, only freezing as she felt her wrist touched. She hated being touched when it was without warning.

Neil had already begun to grab at her and leave bruises against lightly tanned porcelain skin.

“I said I got it.” she snapped out, without meaning to. Sometimes biting her tongue and keeping it in was a reflex, one that was getting her in trouble with more than just her brother’s warning way of looking after her.

Yet she didn't apologize. Instead, Max shrugged her shoulders and pushed straight through the busy hallway in search of the boys for a moment (or a hit in the bathroom) before homeroom. She'd dreaded

this all summer. What it would be like coming back to be with a group of people. How she was going to have to endure their looks and their whispers. How even the teachers would wonder what had happened every time she walked into a classroom.

The hallway dragged on in front of her as she spotted the group in the corner. That dumb red, white, and blue the first thing her eyes connected with and caused her throat to loosen a little bit. Her friends.

Steps over to them were being taken slowly. Until an obstruction in the form of a guy in a green and and white jersey stepped into her path, towering over her. As her eyes trailed up to his face, the set of her eyes lowered into a glare, "...yes?" aggravation filled her tone as she rolled her eyes at the senior.

"is it true?" motherfucking idiots.

"Go fuck yourself." this was exactly what she was afraid of.

"If your morals are anywhere as loose as your brother's you'll do that one for me, sweetheart."

Max's hands balled into fists around the denim of the jacket around her.

This had been what she was worried about. The walls that wanted to talk. She could almost bet that every phone in the school contained lies over what had happened at the mall that night. Most of the bullshit consisted of shitbags believing her brother a monster. Because of course, it was always easier to make up stories than to believe in the supernatural.

Those details had of course been covered up.

"Your brother was a piece of shit anyway Max, what's the difference? Come on, let's go to class." It was Lucas's voice in her ear, his hand pulling her away from the senior boy in front of her. There were no words of protest, no standing up for her or for Billy. Instead, there was just further chide on the brother who'd never liked

him. The one who'd been far too protective of his little sister to see her in a relationship so young.

She got that now.

With a tone harsher than she'd meant to, but only by points, Max snapped, "**Lucas, don't touch me**". She was sick of it, sick of the way he was always brushed it off like it was nothing. How he never asked what Billy was like before they'd come to Hawkins. He just didn't give a shit. He hadn't from the get go. It was beginning to wear her down.

Billy wasn't a saint, she'd never peg him at that. But to have five seconds of someone asking **WHY** would have made all of the difference.

She'd almost forgotten they were in the highway. That this kid was standing right in front of them giving her a hard time in front of the entire school. Until his mouth opened that was, "**tell me freshy, she get down on her knees for you yet?**"

That was all it took for the blind rage to anchor her to her spot. Before Max could control even so much as a second of her movements her fist had come up, the strike had been a well landed and deliberate crack to the senior boy's perfect jaw. A punch that her brother had taught her how to throw back in California beside the crashing waves. Just in case she ever needed it.

Well, she'd needed it.

Everything was a blur then as school personnel few out of office doors, "**HARGROVE.**"

what. the. shit.

"**MAYFIELD. It's fucking Mayfield.**" anger and rage still had a vice grip around her throat as she spat out in the direction of the teacher who'd dared to call her after her brother's surname.

The only reason the selfish son of a bitch knew who she was was due

to the fact that they'd seen her pictures in the papers. They were just another senseless prick who bought into the fact that the media said he was nothing more than a monster. The rumors that ran ramped through the school that he'd killed the police commissioner after going after his freak of a daughter.

She was fucking sick to death of the lies, slander and bullshit.

“Get to the office. Now. Behavior like this will not be tolerated within the walls of Hawkins High.” right. Because the bullshit that already circulated was just fine but standing up to a jackass was crossing the line. Sure. great policies.

Welcome to high school hell.